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There are many other interesting achievements performed by this sagacious race of insects. I have recently discovered a great difference in their mental operations and capacities. Individuals there are which possess great intellectual superiority to the common laboring classes, which is manifested in the fact that they assume the leadership in all their important public works and army movements. Some are much more sagacious and cautious in avoiding traps and dangerous contrivances set for them by the scarcely superior human genus.

One of our Germans invented a very destructive ant trap. It is set over the entrance to their city, and is so contrived, that going or coming it is sure to entrap them; but not all of them. Occasionally a well formed fellow is observed to arrive at the top of the precipice, where he stops and gravely and cautiously surveys the awful abyss below, filled with frantic and terribly distressed thousands—who have incautiously precipitated themselves into inevitable ruin—and after viewing the dreadful and disastrous condition of his fellow laborers, he seems to understand the true nature of the misfortune, and turning from the irremediable calamity, hastens down the inclined place into the grass weeds, beyond the reach of further observation.

Quite a number of them are seen to examine and hastily fly from the entrance of this destructive trap.

AZALEA VISCOSA, A FLY-CATCHER.

BY W. W. BAILEY.

THE many curious observations published of late in regard to vegetable fly-catchers have opened my eyes to such phenomena as are presented in my forest walks. As is well known to all botanists, our sweet swamp azalea (*Azalea viscosa*) has its corolla covered on the outside with innumerable clammy and glandular hairs. Each hair is a prolongation of the cuticle and is surmounted by a purple and globular gland. In the bud, these hairs appear to cover the whole surface of the flower, but when the corolla expands, they are seen to occupy the midrib of the

petals as well as the tube of the corolla. These glandular hairs are efficacious fly-catchers, but what the object is in thus securing insect prey, I will not pretend to state.

I have been amusing myself, if any such apparently cruel occupation can be considered entertaining, in watching the capture of flies by the azaleas. When I first brought the flowers home, many small insects, as winged ants, were entrapped amidst the hairs. These have remained alive several days, still vainly struggling for freedom. As the houseflies are abundant in my room, it occurred to me that I might extirpate the pests, and at the same time learn something of the process of insect-catching. I have not noticed that the powerful fragrance of the blossoms attracts the housefly, although I have no doubt that it does the smaller insects. It seemed to be accidental when the houseflies were captured. I exposed a number of buds and fully opened blossoms on a sunny window-sill thronged with flies. It was not many minutes before I had several captures. A mere touch of a fly's leg to the glutinous hairs was sufficient for his detention. A struggle only made matters worse, as other legs were by this means brought in contact with the glands. These emit long glairy threads which fasten to the hairs of the flies' legs. They may be drawn out to a great length and tenuity, still retaining their strength. If two buds are pressed together and then drawn apart, innumerable threads may be seen to bind them. There is a complete network of them between the various glands. They will confine the strongest fly; he is at once held like Gulliver among the Liliputians. Under the microscope, the legs of the fly are seen to be covered with the secretion, which is perfectly white and transparent. In one attempt to escape, a housefly lifted a flower bodily from the window-sill, perhaps a quarter of an inch, but at once sank back exhausted amidst the hairs. One, after long efforts, escaped, but seemed incapable of using its legs; it flew away readily. In one instance, I have found the dried remains of a small insect embedded amidst the hairs, but cannot say whether its juices were in any way absorbed by the plant. If such assimilation takes place, what is its purpose? Can this phenomenon of fly-catching be in any case accidental, or is some nice purpose concealed in it? I merely state the facts as I have observed them; perhaps others can supply further information.